196 secretly replaces the object in the new thatch. A white ox is sacrificed at the well.

The information collected on this ceremony is still fragmentary but the color of the clothing worn by those officiating, that of the victim, the number of bands of the loin-cloth, and the number of cowrie shells given by the griot to his sister, the origin of the gravel used as the seat for the Kéita are evidence that we have here a ritual executed under the protection of Faro (see Chap. II)

175 As early as the fourteenth century numerous travelers described the Bambara /xv/as organized into small groups headed by a chief and more or less submitting to the neighboring empires. This state of affairs lasted until the period of the Peul invasion of this region (in the seventeenth century) which founded two kingdoms and created a local aristocracy of mixed Peul and Bambara blood. The first of these kingdoms was that of Ségou, the history of which is partly known (1). The investigations centered particularly in this area; the chief

1. On the history of the Bambara we refer the reader to the well documented volume of L. Tauxier. Histoire des Bambara.

town which was a capital for a long time retains the traces of a well [197] organized legal system and religion. It is also in this area that, according to specialists, the purest dialect is spoken. (2)

● [556 191] 2. The children of families sufficiently wealthy to afford it were formerly sent to Ségou to live with affinals in order to learn how to speak well an elegant and pure language.

197 The Bambara dialects belong to the sub-group of Mandingo languages 212 of the Nigero-Senegalese group. (3) The Bambara know certain

3. See A. Meillet et M. Cohen. Les Langues du Monde /Languages of the World/, p. 546.

585 The husband spends the whole day after the wedding night in his hut, where relatives, friends, and neighbors come to congratulate him and present minor gifts of food. He invites them to eat and drink. The wedding is thus prolonged for several days, depending on the husband's wealth, during which time the couple is at the disposal of the guests.

[556] Rich families like to show off the trousseau, jewels, and gifts bestowed on the bride, so during the whole day after the wedding night everything is paraded with great pomp through the village by people of caste who proclaim the items and exaggerate their value. Toward evening the presents are shown one last time to the bride, who sits on a low bench with her face hidden behind a kind of tray, woven with grass, which she holds in her [533] hand. Drums and other instruments make a great uproar, while a female griot, standing behind the bride, sings love songs. Every- [302] one admires the bride's hair, which is artistically braided in a flat crest with two small braids on each side of the face hanging in front and behind the ears. The women finger her jewels as they admire them and her thick-soled sandals.

To conclude the ceremony, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives cowries to the leader of the singing, and guns are fired for the [481] last time. Then the bride gets up, glides over the ground without lifting her feet, and enters the hut with her companions, while the guests retire. [204]

Second Marriage

595 The number of wives is limited only by the necessity of providing each one with a suitable living. This means that, theoretically, polygamy is a privilege of the rich. Some men practice it in order to pass as rich men, which flatters their pride, while others use it to gratify a sensual temperament. Most often, however, people in modest circumstances have several wives solely for economic reasons.

When an only wife has young children and no servant to help her, she is extremely overworked. When this is the case,

231 [556] Horses, a mark of wealth, receive scarcely more attention. The stallions, particularly those of the chief, are fettered to stakes at the hut, but the mares are left free to roam around the village and at the age of 20 months are covered by any male horse whatever. The feeding of the mare and her offspring is neglected, that of the male horse is more satisfactory.

235 Poultry is raised in all villages, in nearly every yard. They live on what they can find. In upper Ivory Coast the natives drive them onto the cultivated fields after the harvest. Often, the villagers build small roosts attached to the house walls.

[36] B. Stock Raising Areas

231 In the Sahelian zone, shrubby vegetation affords a very precious source of nutriment for camels, horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. The 14th parallel marks the line of demarcation between the zebus to the north and the taurins to the south. This line passes through Kayes, Bafoulabé, Kolokani, south of Ségou, San, and Tougan. It corresponds to the northern limit of the tsetse fly.

Peul zebus are very well represented in the Macina region during the dry season and in the Haoussa [Hausa] region in the north and the Gourma region in the south during the rainy season. It is a good animal for butchering. Faraboué zebus, produced by the crossing of taurins with zebus, live in the zone cohabited by the two species. Finally, Moorish zebus in the Nioro, Nara, and Macina circles are not so good for butchering as the Peul zebus, but the cows are better milk producers (six to seven liters a day compared to two or three).

Woolly sheep are found at Macina, in the Macina circle, and in the Issa Ber circle. They die where more than 60 centimeters of rain falls per year. Their shepherds, the Rimaïbé, change their pastures according to the Niger floods. Finally, the delicate, well-muscled goats of the Sahel are found again in the Fouta-Djallon to the south.

The Sudan zone is less suited to stock raising. The high bush is infested with tsetse flies, ticks, and gastro-intestinal parasites. Camels disappear.

The taurins, doubtless introduced by the Berber peoples from southern Morocco, are derived from long-horned cattle. The

4: Henry--234 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

5. Exhibition of the Bride's Trousseau on the Evening of the First Day

585

Although the sun is high above the horizon, it is already without strength and life, and at the door of the entry hut to the couple's dwelling, drums and trumpetings rage and give honor to the young woman who is seated in the midst of them on a tiny stool. She allows people to admire her adornment, her beads and her jewels, her rings of copper and tin and sometimes also of gold and silver; she allows them to rave about the shoes with soles three fingers thick, which are a gift of the groom, and about her artistic, finely braided coiffure, [302] a mountain of hair forming a crest across her head which ends in two thin locks in front of and behind each ear -- cavalryman's helmet with a broken chin strap, one might say, all ebony and thrown on its side. But she has given her heart and her promise, and she covers her face with the platter of braided grass that she holds in her right hand.

[534] The horns of antelopes, cows, and bulls, which are the Bambara trumpets, cease to roar, the drums stop booming, and a group of women (usually storytellers /griottes/, for they sniff out festivals and orgies with the scent of a vulture who smells carrion for 20 leagues) place themselves behind her and sing songs of love.

Preceded by a band of singers and a group of drums (2), the

[536]

2. This parade of the trousseau across the village only occurs at rich weddings when the trousseau is really worth the trouble. Most frequently only one exhibition takes place, the one in the evening.

file djiralaou (the women who show the gourds) have run through the village all morning, going from hut to hut to display the trousseau. That is not enough; under the eyes of the bride it is displayed again, exhibited one last time, and without fail the connoisseurs /213/ assess it and, without any embarrassment whatsoever, set an accurate value on it (1).

585

1. Sometimes this exhibition is made before the arrival of the young bride.

The shoes with soles three fingers thick, the white blouse and the loincloth that the bride wears, together with the koundougou fini, a huge piece of cloth that can yield three or four loincloths, are a gift from the husband; the rest -- cloth, gourds, pottery, mortars for grinding millet, cotton to be carded and spun, all come to her from her family. The size of the trousseau depends a little on the family's fortune, but as a general rule it can be stated that at her marriage every young woman receives some ten tafé (pieces of cloth, one and a half to two meters long by one meter wide, which the women wind around their bodies), some 15 gourds, and for ornaments at least a bracelet and a bead necklace (2). One is sometimes present at

[556 567]

2. Brides from rich families receive a slave called gouadani to do the cooking, as well as a cow, small chains for their feet, bracelets, a bead necklace with a piece of amber the size of a hen's egg, and two small gold earrings.

hilarious scenes, for among the crowd of the curious that press around, there are inevitably some rejected suitors. They have put aside hatred and rancour, for the boli of the village protects her. Yet they love her; deep in their hearts they keep all their love for her, and it is certainly they, the wounded ones, who take her free hand and pour onto her knees a few handfuls of cowrie shells.

When the vainglorious exhibition of the trousseau is finished, the fouroubloma tigi or the guardian of the wedding presents, gives the mistress of song 5 kémé, or 400 cowrie shells, and the guns are fired one last time. The young bride gets up at once, her platter of grass still over her face, and gliding with her heels on the ground, not lifting her feet, she goes into her dwelling followed by two or three matrons, and then she disappears in a light cloud of dust. The crowd withdraws, for to follow her or even to stay where they are would be indiscreet.